

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. cancelled.
2. cancelled.
3. cancelled
4. cancelled

5. (currently amended) A method of detecting the presence or absence of *E. coli* virulence-related genes in a sample comprising:

adding the sample to an amplification mixture including ~~at least one pair of~~ primers pairs ~~selected from the group consisting of:~~

TCTCAGTGGGCGTTCTTATG (SEQ ID NO. 1) and

TACCCCTCAACTGCTAATA (SEQ ID NO. 2); and

GCGGTTTTATTGCAATTAGC (SEQ ID NO. 5) and

TCCCGTCAACCTTCACTGTA (SEQ ID NO. 6); ~~and combinations thereof~~ and

primer pairs for the detection of at least one of the following *Escherichia coli* virulence-related genes selected from the group consisting of: eaeA, EHEC-HlyA, Stx2c, Stx2d, Stx2e, rfbE and fliC ;

incubating the amplification mixture under conditions which promote DNA amplification; and

identifying the amplification products, thereby simultaneously assaying for the presence of major *E. coli* virulence factors in said sample.

6. (new) The method according to claim 5 wherein the fliC primer pair is TACCATCGCAAAGCAACTCC (SEQ ID No. 19) and GTCGGCAACGTTAGTGATACC (SEQ ID No. 20).

7. (new) The method according to claim 5 wherein the rfbE primer pair is CTACAGGTGAAGGTGGAATGG (SEQ ID No. 17) and ATTCTCTCTTTCTCTGCGG (SEQ ID No. 18).

8. (new) The method according to claim 5 wherein the eaeA primer pair is ATGCTTAGTGCTGGTTTAGG (SEQ ID No. 11) and GCCTTCATCATTTGCTTTC (SEQ ID No. 12).

9. (new) The method according to claim 5 wherein the HlyA primer pair is AGCTGCAAGTGCGGGTCTG (SEQ ID No. 15) and TACGGGTTATGCCTGCAAGTTCAC (SEQ ID No. 16).

10. (new) The method according to claim 5 wherein the Stx2c primer pair is GCGGTTTTATTTGCATTAGT (SEQ ID No. 7) and AGTACTCTTTTCCGGCCACT (SEQ ID No. 8).

11. (new) The method according to claim 5 wherein the Stx2d primer pair is GGTAATGAGTTCTCTAAGTAT (SEQ ID No. 13) and CAGCAAATCCTGAACCTGACG (SEQ ID No. 14).

12. (new) The method according to claim 5 wherein the Stx2e primer pair is ATGAAGTGATATTGTTAAAGTGGA (SEQ ID No. 9) and AGCCACATATAAATTATTCGT (SEQ ID No. 10).